

## **MIA : Early American Marxism : International Working Men's Association In America (1864-76)**

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### **Organizational History of the "International Working Men's Association"**

#### **THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND**

As the labor historian Selig Perlman has aptly noted, modern American socialism began in the years immediately following the Civil War. While the bloodbath between the United States and the Confederate States solved the fundamental social issue of the day, the slavery question, the four year rush to produce goods of war also accelerated a process of industrialization that changed the economic kernel of society. No longer was the United States merely a nation of small farmers, artisans, and small-scale industrialists ruled by an educated elite. A new centralized and urbanized production process was rapidly coming into being, a process needing a steady supply of labor-power to keep the mills and machines of modern industry whirling. Amidst the smokey bowels of this new mechanized world, a distinct working-class began to emerge and to become conscious of its own existence.

This process of economic expansion was global, Morris Hillquit observed just 40 years after the fact:

"The advent of steam power and railroads had rapidly revolutionized the former slow methods of production and transportation in Europe as well as in America. Home industries and small manufacture were supplanted by gigantic factories and a system of mass production. New machines were invented, new industries created, new markets discovered, and new relations established. A fresh breeze wafted through the old countries and imbued them with a new energy and vigor. The industrial progress was followed by a general political awakening and a renewal of the working-class movement." (fn. Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 175.)

This new class-consciousness took deepest root amongst the sizeable population of German-Americans, who for reasons of linguistics and culture found the socialist agitation of Ferdinand Lassalle (which began in Germany in 1863) and Karl Marx (whose London-based International Workingmen's Association was established in 1864) most amenable. German-Americans were no small fringe group in American society: from 1850 through 1890, more Germans emigrated to the United States than the nationals of any other country until by 1884 fully one-third of the population of Chicago, the archetype of modern American capitalism, consisted of first- and second-generation German immigrants. (fn. Kieseewetter, "German-American Labor Press," pp. 138-139.)

The emerging socialist movement was founded on the premise that inherent in the process of industrial production was a struggle between the producers and the owner of the means of production for primacy. The socialist political idea was also based on the fundamental concept that only combined and concerted international

action would make social transformation possible. As the English shoemaker George Odger, President of the Central Council of the International, noted in an address to French workers:

“Whenever working men of one country are sufficiently well organized to demand higher wages and shorter hours, they are met by the threat of the employer to hire cheaper foreign labor, and this evil can only be removed by the international organization of the working class.” (fn. quoted in Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 177.)

## FOUNDATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL

### 1. “Foundation Meeting”—London—Sept. 28, 1864

The Working Men’s International Association was founded in St. Martin’s Hall, London, on Sept. 28, 1864. The gathering elected a committee with instructions to prepare a provisional platform and constitution for an international workingmen’s association. This committee consisted of 21 Englishmen, 10 Germans, 9 French, 6 Italians, 2 Poles, and 2 Swiss. (fn. quoted in Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pp. 177-178.)

Karl Marx wrote the International’s “Provisional Rules,” which were unanimously approved by the Provisional Committee on November 1, 1864 and published in the press and pamphlet form that same month. Penned by Marx in the English language, the “Provisional Rules” of the International were to the point:

“Considering, That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule; That the economical subjection of the man of labour to the monopoliser of the means of labour, that is, the sources of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence; That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means; That all efforts aiming at the great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries; That the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries; That the present revival of the working classes in all the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and calls for the immediate combination of all disconnected movements; For these reasons- The undersigned members of the committee, holding its powers by resolution of the public meeting held on Sept. 28, 1864, at St. Martin’s Hall, London, have taken the steps necessary for founding the Working Men’s International Association; They declare that this International Association and all societies and individuals adhering to it, will acknowledge truth,

justice, and morality, as the basis of their conduct towards each other, and towards all men, without regard to colour, creed, or nationality; They hold it the duty of a man to claim the rights of a man and a citizen, not only for himself, but for every man who does his duty. No rights without duties, no duties without rights." (fn. Marx, "Provisional Rules of the Association," in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, v. 20, pp. 14-15.)

These provisional rules were ratified and made official by the Geneva Congress in September of 1866.

Although remembered by its revised name, the International Workingmen's Association, the original name of the organization was "Working Men's International Association." The group was first referred to as "the Association" and members referred to one another by the appellation "Citizen" rather than "Comrade." (fn. For organizational name, see the cover of the group's first publication, a November 1864 pamphlet of which the cover was reproduced in facsimile in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 20, pg. 3. For use of the title "Citizen," see "From the Minute Book of the General Council" in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 20, pp. 356-359 and *passim*.) The name seems to have been officially changed to International Working Men's Association sometime towards the summer of 1865.

The executive of the International Association was originally known as the "Central Council" (renamed at the end of 1866 as the "General Council") and was to have its seat in London. The President, Treasurer, and General Secretary of the Association were to be Englishmen, while each nation was to be represented in the General Council by a Corresponding Secretary.

According to the early historian of the Socialist movement Thomas Kirkup:

"The General Council was to summon annual congresses and exercise an effective control over the affairs of the Association, but local societies were to have free play in all local questions. As a further means of union, it was recommended that the workmen of the various countries should be united in national bodies, represented by national central organs, but no independent local society was to be excluded from direct correspondence with the General Council." (fn. Kirkup, *A History of Socialism*, pp. 168-169.)

## FOUNDATION OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL IN LONDON

About 40 people participated in the initial meeting of the Central Council on Oct. 5, 1864, individuals elected by the London Foundation Meeting. The preponderance of the members of the Central Council were British, but there were members of the French, Italian, and German workers' movement as well, the latter of whom was represented by Karl Marx and Johann Eccarius. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pg. 372.) Organizationally, the International Association had Corresponding Secretaries

whose task was to communicate with the various national Sections: P.V. Lubenz for France, Karl Marx for Germany, G.P. Fontana for Italy, J.E. Holtorp for Poland, H.F. Jung for Switzerland. President of the Council, the chairman of the group's sessions, was shoemaker George Odger, taking his place in his absence was Vice President Johann Eccarius, while William R. Cremer served a largely ceremonial role as an "Honorary General Secretary" - in practice he functioned as the group's Recording Secretary. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pp. 53-54.)

The International Association's initial bills were paid by members of the Central Council themselves, who assessed themselves a hefty 1 s. per quarter as a rate of dues. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pg. 36.) By November 1864 the group had determined to issue membership cards, beginning with a printing of 1,000. These cards were sold for 1 penny each, a *de facto* initiation charge. The same number copies of the inaugural address and organizational rules were put to press. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pp. 47; 54.) The organization charged individuals wishing to join annual dues of 1 shilling (i.e. 12 pence - a penny per month) and bolstered its bank account with a soirée at which an Italian band performed, netting nearly £8.7s. (fn. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pg. 89.) Dues were to take effect for the calendar year, beginning Jan. 1, 1865.

## 2. "First London Conference"—London—Sept. 25-29, 1865

The fledgling International Association sought to hold a First Congress in Brussels in 1865, but obstacles prevented attendance by a French delegation and the Belgian government banned the gathering inside its borders, so the planned meeting was cancelled and a small conference was held in London in its stead.

The Association also sought to gain affiliations *en masse*. At the meeting of July 31, 1866, a rate of 1/2 penny per member for societies joining was unanimously adopted, the cost of membership cards extra. In addition, the Corresponding Secretary was to have the power to "negotiate with poor societies on easier terms." (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pg. 218.)

Sections of the International Association began to be formed immediately after press reports announced the meeting in St. Martin's Hall. By mid-October, a group of Geneva workers had established a section. Other previously-established societies of workingmen similarly declared their affiliation. For example, three German workers' societies in London, one dating back to 1840, united into one section of the International Association at a meeting held on January 4, 1865. (fn. The declaration of these three societies appears in (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pg. 63.)

## **THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—FIRST CORRESPONDING SECRETARY IN AMERICA, 1865**

With regards to the United States, the Central Council of the Association sought to colonize, by sending 400 membership cards and copies of the Address and Rules (the basic membership document of the group) with a Citizen Coraz, a friend of a member of the Council who was planning on departing for America. The first official Corresponding Secretary for America was Leon Lewis, an American journalist resident in London who was appointed to the Central Council in 1865. He did not participate in the work of the Council, however, and was replaced by another journalist, the Englishman Peter Fox, in May of 1865. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866...: Minutes*, pg. 187 with biographical information on pp. 451; 459-460.) Nothing seems to have been heard from Coraz again.

## **FOUNDATION OF THE NATIONAL LABOR UNION (NLU)**

Morris Hillquit noted in his pioneer history of the American socialist movement: “Immediately upon the close of the civil war a strong trade-union movement developed in the United States. New local and national organizations sprang up in almost every trade, but there was as yet no common bond between these organizations.” (Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 183.)

Prior to the Civil War, unions had tended to be local and craft-based in their scope. The post war period saw the marked growth of a new phenomenon, the national union. Between 1864 and 1873, the number of national unions ballooned from 6 to 32. (fn. Bernstein, *The First International in America*, pg. 18) The immediate post-war years were also the time when the idea of combining disparate trade unions into a common organization of economic struggle first began to emerge.

In March 1866 a preliminary conference was held in New York which issued a call for a convention to be held in Baltimore in August of that same year.

The Aug. 1866 Founding Convention of the NLU brought together delegates representing over 60 organizations. The NLU called for the establishment of international unions, the organization of unskilled workers, and the eight hour day - an idea developed by Ira Steward, a Boston machinist. At its founding convention the NLU also demanded the improvement of women’s working conditions, the amelioration of urban slums, and the distribution of public lands to actual settlers alone. (fn. Bernstein, *The First International in America*, pg. 18.)

### **3. “First Congress”—Geneva—Sept. 3-8, 1866**

The First Congress of the International took place in Geneva from Sept. 3 to 8, 1866.

It was attended by 60 delegates. Although some of these delegates were representatives of the schools of Proudhon, Blanqui, or Bakunin, the general tendency of the gathering was socialist in the Marxian tradition. (fn. Kirkup, *A History of Socialism*, pg. 169.) The Geneva Convention of 1866 endorsed the 8 Hour Day and condemned female labor in the manufacturing industries “as a cause of the degeneration and demoralization of the human race.” They called for labor unions not to content themselves with immediate matters, but rather to challenge the system of capital itself. The gathering also unanimously condemned standing armies and approved the universal arming of the populus and their instruction in the handling of arms. (fn. Woolsey, *Communism and Socialism*, pp. 138-139.) It called for a comprehensive system of education, both intellectual and technical, which would raise the level of the working class. (fn. Kirkup, *A History of Socialism*, pg. 169.)

Kirkup (1892): “Socialistic principles were set forth only in the most general terms. With regard to labour the International did not seek to enunciate a doctrinaire system, but only to proclaim general principles. They must aim at free cooperation, and for this end the decisive power in the state must be transferred from capitalists and landlords to the workers.” (fn. Kirkup, *A History of Socialism*, pp. 169-170.)

In the aftermath of the First Congress, the Central Council approved a change in the dues assessment for affiliated organizations, which the Congress had pegged at 3 pennies per member per year to 1/2 penny per member per year. This reduction was made at the Oct. 9, 1866 meeting of the Central Council. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1866-1868...: Minutes*, pp. 45-46.) The reduction was made because it seemed unlikely that any organizations would pay the more onerous rate and the impoverished council sought to get at least some money rather than none. The bylaws for England further stated that dues for individual members remained 1 shilling per year (i.e. 1 penny per month).

The First Congress formally delineated the role of the General Council.

## THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—ORSINI’S ORGANIZING MISSION, LATE 1866

Another effort at gaining a foothold in America was made in late 1866 by Italian emigre in London Cesare Orsini, who travelled to the United States briefly and had interviews with Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner, and Horace Greeley, all of whom joined the International Association. Wendell Phillips promised Orsini that the proceeds of one of his lectures would be donated to the Association. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1866-1868...: Minutes*, pg. 72.)

## THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—THE NEW YORK CLUB OF COMMUNISTS, JULY 1867

On July 2, 1867, the New York Club of Communists - first formed ten years earlier declared - its affiliation with the International, the first section of the Association in



America. At a January 1868 gathering in the Germania Assembly Rooms in the Bowery, this group combined with the Lassallean General German Workingmen's Union to form an independent political party, The Social Party of New York and Vicinity, which nominated candidates in the elections that year. The Social Party of New York had two parallel Executive Boards, one English-speaking and the other German-speaking; together these formed the Political Campaign Committee of the Party. The party immediately dissolved after its failure to strike a chord in the 1868 election. (fn. Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pp. 194-195). The most active members of the group reorganized as the General German Workingmen's Society, founded with the intention of organizing and centralizing the myriad trade and labor unions of the city. This group had ties with the National Labor Union as Labor Union No. 5. (fn. Sorge, "Report of the North American Federal Council to the Hague Congress," in *Documents of the First International: The Hague Congress...Minutes and Documents*, pg. 224.)

## SECOND CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL LABOR UNION, 1867.

The Second Convention of the NLU was held in Chicago in August 1867. It was attended by more than 200 delegates. The Second Convention took up the issue of the formation of an independent labor party, a proposal which was closely defeated after debate. The Second Convention also declined to formally affiliate with the International, although it did pass a resolution declaring its sympathy and promising "its cooperation to the organized working men of Europe in their struggle against political and social injustice." (Quoted in Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 188.)

## 4. "Second Congress"—Lausanne—Sept. 2-8, 1867

The Second Congress of the International was held in Lausanne from Sept. 2 to 8, 1867. Representation was on the basis of one delegate per branch of the International; branches with more than 500 members were entitled to send one additional delegate for every additional 500 members. (fn. "The General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Lausanne Congress," in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 20, pg. 423.) The gathering was attended by 71 delegates.

Theodore Woolsey, writing in 1880, noted:

"The leaders of the International cared nothing for strikes, in themselves considered; but regarded them as desirable means of bringing about the good time when private capital should cease to be. The strikes would unite the operatives by close ties, as common sufferers and as having common enemies. They would turn the eyes of the operatives toward the International, thus increasing its strength and importance. They would make capital more odious and open laborers' eyes to the advantages of universal combination." (fn. Woolsey, *Communism and Socialism*, pg. 141.)

The Lausanne Congress regularized dues at 1 penny per member to the central fund. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1866-1868...: Minutes*, pg. 160.)

## THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—WILLIAM J. JESSUP OF THE NLU

In 1867 there was only the barest toehold of the International Association in the United States. The Association was more or less a central coordinating center for trade unions rather than an organization uniting politically radical groups. Its sole reliable correspondent in the US was William J. Jessup, a carpenter who served as the Corresponding Secretary of the New York section of the National Labor Union. Jessup received newspapers from around the United States and did his best to keep the International Association abreast of labor doings in America through the organization's Corresponding Secretary for America, Peter Fox. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1866-1868...: Minutes*, pg. 169.) The International Association also sought to correspond with J.C. Wholly, the President of the National Labor Union, and to exchange British labor periodicals such as *The Beehive*, and the Manchester *Cooperator* for the Chicago *Workingmen's Advocate*. In November of 1867, Peter Fox resigned his post as Corresponding Secretary for America to dedicate himself to paying work as a journalist for *The Beehive*. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The General Council of the First International, 1866-1868...: Minutes*, pg. 172.)

## THIRD CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL LABOR UNION, 1868

The Third Convention of the NLU was held in New York in August 1868. This convention approved the establishment of an independent labor party, and the National Reform Party was thus established. William H. Sylvis, a strong advocate of independent political action, was elected President of the organization and he was also the author of the group's platform.

## 5. "Third Congress"—Brussels—Sept. 6-13, 1868

The Third Congress of the International was held from Sept. 6 to 13, 1868, in Brussels, Belgium. It was attended by 98 delegates representing England, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. (fn. Kirkup, *A History of Socialism*, pg. 171.) In the view of Woolsey, "its doings show a repetition of the opinions expressed at the previous congresses."

Anarchist opinion was gaining strength already by this time, as illustrated in the speech of General Secretary Dupont to the gathering: "What we wish to overthrow is, not the tyrant, but tyranny. We want no governments any longer, for governments



oppress us by taxes; we want no armies any longer, for armies butcher and murder us; we want no religion any longer, for religions stifle the understanding.” (fn. Quoted in Woolsey, *Communism and Socialism*, pp. 143-144.)

## **THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—JOINT ACTION BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE NLU**

In May 1869 the General Council of the International addressed an open letter to the National Labor Union, noting that the termination of the anti-slavery war had ushered in a new epoch in the annals of the American working class and inviting the NLU to send delegates to the 1869 Basle Convention of the International.

A war scare between England and the United States festered in 1869, a development which helped push the International and the NLU closer together. The General Council of the International Association appealed to American organized labor to stop any forthcoming war, arguing that such a conflict would set back the emerging workers' movement on both sides of the Atlantic.

The President of the NLU, William H. Sylvis, was wholeheartedly in the camp of the International Association. The same month that the General Council wrote to him, he wrote a letter from Philadelphia in which he said:

“Our last war has had for its result to build up the most infamous financial aristocracy in the whole world. This money power pumps the substance of the people. We have declared war against it, and think that we shall gain the victory. We shall first try suffrage; but, if it fails, we shall have recourse to more efficacious measures. A little blood-letting is sometimes necessary in desperate cases.” (fn. Quoted in Woolsey, *Communism and Socialism*, pg. 153.)

The NLU's 4th Convention approached with prospects excellent of a formal affiliation of the NLU with the International. However, on July 27, 1869, NLU President William H. Sylvis suddenly died after a brief illness.

Historian of the First International Samuel Bernstein notes:

“History is not written in the conditional tense, a historian once said. What Sylvis might have done in behalf of international labor unity, had he lived, cannot be known. Certainly he was one of its best champions in the United States.” (fn. Bernstein, *The First International in America*, pg. 32.)

Morris Hillquit recounted:

“Sylvis did not leave a single successor in the ranks of the organization of sufficient intelligence and power to inoculate in the young movement the substance and spirit of the International - the distinctness of labor interests, and the German socialist of the United States had too little influence on the American labor movement to guide its political action.” (fn. Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 193.)

## **FOURTH CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL LABOR UNION, 1868.**

The 4th Convention of the NLU was held in Philadelphia in August 1869. It decided to send A.C. Cameron as a delegate to the International. Hillquit states that Cameron attended the September 1869, 4th Convention of the International and there “gave grossly exaggerated accounts of the strength of the organization represented by him, but did not otherwise participate in the deliberations of the convention.” (fn. Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 193).

## **6. “Fourth Congress”—Basle—Sept. 5-6, 1869**

The Fourth Congress of the International was held in Basle in September 1869. It was attended by 80 delegates.

The 4th Congress repeated a resolution for the transformation of land from private to collective property. A proposal to abolish the right of inheritance failed to obtain a majority, 32 delegates voting in favor, 23 opposed, and 17 abstaining. (fn. Kirkup, *A History of Socialism*, pg. 172.)

One important action of the Basle Congress was a strengthening of the role and power of the General Council of the International in London. Resolution IV stated that “Each new section or society which is formed and wishes to be part of the International, must immediately announce its adhesion to the General Council,” while Resolution V added “The General Council has the right to admit or reject the affiliation of any new society or group, subject to appeal at the next Congress.” Resolution VII stated the matter in no uncertain terms: “When conflicts arise between the societies or branches of a national group, or between groups of different nationalities, the General Council shall have the right to decide the conflict, subject to appeal at the next Congress which shall decide definitively.” (fn. Printed in *MECW* vol. 44, pg. 351.)

The Basle Congress declared that the next Congress would be held in September 1870 in Paris, but on July 15 of that year war was declared by France against Prussia and the Paris Congress was cancelled.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—GERMAN SECTION 1 ESTABLISHED**

In December 1869 the General German Workingmen’s Society declared its adherence to the International Workingmen’s Association and constituted itself as German Section 1. (fn. Sorge, “Report of the North American Federal Council to the Hague Congress,” in *Documents of the First International: The Hague Congress...Minutes and Documents*, pg. 224.)

## **SORGE BIOGRAPHY**

Friederich Adolph Sorge was born in 1828 at Bethau, near Torgau in Saxony. Sorge was the son of a liberal Lutheran clergyman. Sorge's father had put his parsonage at the disposal of the underground railway that shuttled Polish revolutionaries between Poland, France, and Belgium. Sorge was educated by his father, who taught him Latin, Greek, history, and literature. Sorge was 19 at the time of the revolution of 1848 and he joined a band of armed revolutionaries in Saxony that was quickly put down by Pomeranian troops. In 1849 Sorge went to Switzerland before returning to Germany and joining the Karlsruhe Freikorps and fought in losing battles against the Prussians at battles in Baden and Palatinate. After the defeat of the Freikorps, Sorge crossed the Swiss frontier and was disarmed. In 1851, he was told to leave the country by the Swiss police. Sorge moved to Belgium, where he worked as a carpenter and German teacher. In March of 1852, the Belgian police ordered his expulsion; return to Germany was out of the question, his having been condemned to death in absentia for his participation in the revolution. So Sorge crossed to England, where he lived in London, unemployed. He contracted cholera. Upon his recovery, he was set aboard a ship for New York, arriving in June of 1852, where he was eventually drawn into the fledgling Marxist movement. (fn. Herreshoff, *American Disciples of Marx*, pp. 57-59.)

In 1857, Sorge became active in a new organization, the New York Communist Club. The Communist Club was an educational society, sympathetic to labor but not active in union organization or strike campaigns. The immediate political outlet for members of the Communist Club was the antislavery movement, and most members of the group were (fn. Herreshoff, London. , pp. 70-71.)

## **THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—FRENCH SECTION 2 ESTABLISHED**

In May 1870, Section 2 of the International Association, a French-speaking group, was formed as the result of a merger of two local branches of the Republican Union of the French Language. Section 2 was formally recognized by the General Council in London in August of that same year. (fn. *Documents of the First International: The Hague Congress...Minutes and Documents*, pg. 709.) German Section 1 and French Section 2 conducted a lively discourse and together sponsored a mass meeting in New York on Nov. 19 in opposition to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany and the Franco-German war. (fn. Sorge, "Report of the North American Federal Council to the Hague Congress," in *Documents of the First International: The Hague Congress...Minutes and Documents*, pg. 225.)

## **THE FIFTH CONVENTION AND DEATH OF THE NATIONAL LABOR UNION, 1870**

At the 5th Convention of the NLU, held in Cincinnati in August 1870, a resolution was passed in which the NLU declared "its adherence to the principles of the

**International Working-Men's Association" and stated that it "expects to join the said association in a short time." (fn. Quoted in Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 193.)**

**Morris Hillquit delivered the organization's eulogy in his 1903 book:**

**"But the National Labor Union never joined the International, and never developed into a genuine class-conscious working men's party. The further fate of the National Labor Party, and with it the Labor Reform Party, was the common fate of all independent political parties formed by trade unions before and after it. As soon as it acquired any appreciable strength, it was invaded by professional politicians, who entangled it in alliances with other political parties; its platform was gradually watered, its class character obliterated, its identity obscured, and finally it merged into one of the dominant political parties." (fn. Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* [1903], pg. 193).**

## **7. "Second London Conference"—London—Sept. 17-23, 1870**

**In September of 1870 there was but a small Conference which met in London in lieu of a full Congress of the organization..**

## **THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE IWA FOR NORTH AMERICA**

**This joint activity led to the formation of a Central Committee of the IWA for North America, which was established on Dec. 1, 1870. A newly formed Czech Section also took part in this new organization. Two German sections from Chicago immediately affiliated with the Central Committee, which was formally recognized by the General Council in a letter dated March 14, 1871. (fn. Sorge, "Report of the North American Federal Council to the Hague Congress," in *Documents of the First International: The Hague Congress...Minutes and Documents*, pg. 225.) The Central Committee included one member from each section and was designed to organize and centralize propaganda, to communicate with the General Council of the Association, and to control admission of members to the Association. The first three members of the Central Committee were F.A. Sorge (German section), B. Hubert (French section), and V. Jandus (Czech section), with Sorge taking the role of General Secretary. (fn. Bernstein, *The First International in America*, pg. 54.)**

## **8. "Fifth Congress," The Hague, Sept. 2-7, 1872**

## **THE INTERNATIONAL IN AMERICA—THE SEAT OF INTERNATIONAL MOVED TO AMERICA**

**In 1872 the seat of the International was moved from London to New York.**

**9. “Sixth Congress,” Geneva, Sept. 4-8, 1873**

**10. “Final Conference,” Philadelphia, July 15, 1876**

**On Sunday, July 15, 1876, ten remaining adherents of the International Association and one representative from Germany gathered in Philadelphia and declared an end to that organization. (fn. Quint, *The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement*, pp. 13-14). The stage was set for the Founding Convention of the group which ultimately emerged as the Socialist Labor Party, a gathering which was convened in that same city just four days later.**